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STATE AUTOMATION SYSTEMS STUDY

SITE VISIT: AUGUST 25 - 27, SEPTEMBER 7 - 9, 1993

NEW YORK STATE REPORT

NOVEMBER 2, 1994

FINAL

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FNS Contract No. 53-3109-2-007

THE ORKAND CORPORATION

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STATE PROFILE

System Name: Welfare Management System (WMS)

Start Date: March 1975

Completion Date: March 1982 (Upstate), June 1986 (NYC)

Contractor: Maximus (monitoring)
EDS/Grumman (facilities management)

Transfer From: N/A

Cost:

	Upstate	NYC
Actual:	$85,448,857	$80,469,968
Projected:	$41,800,000	$75,416,250
FSP Share:	$ 5,960,657	$17,260,352
FSP %:	7.0%	21.4%

Number of Users: 40,000 (estimated - Upstate and NYC)

Basic Architecture:

Mainframe: Unisys 2200/9222 (upstate) Unisys 2200/900 (NYC)

Workstations: Type not known

Telecommunications Network: Statewide backbone, T1 circuits via 56 KB lines to local hubs; 9600/2400 baud line to remote offices

System Profile:

Programs: FSP, AFDC, Medicaid, General Assistance and Services

1.0 STATE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The New York (NY) Food Stamp Program (FSP) is administered by the Department of Social Services (DSS). There are three major social services divisions within this Department: Economic Security, Health and Long Term Care, and Services and Community Development. Each division is under the direction of a deputy commissioner. The program divisions are supported by the Divisions of Field Operations, Systems Support and Information Services, Management Support and Quality Improvement, and Counsel and Administrative Hearings.

The Division of Economic Security is responsible for public assistance (PA), food stamps, general assistance (GA), energy programs, and employment policies. The Division of Health and Long Term Care is responsible for Medicaid, and the Division of Services and Community Development is responsible for adoption, foster and child care, and preventive services.

Under a recent reorganization, the field operations function was moved from under each of the program areas to a separate division that supports all DSS programs. This group is responsible for operations, staffing, and compliance. They also provide on-site support and both generic and specialized training. The full responsibilities of this division are still being defined and it is not yet fully staffed.

The automated system that supports the Food Stamp Program is managed by the Systems Support and Information Services (SSIS). The Welfare Management System (WMS) supports the Food Stamp Program (FSP), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program, and Medicaid eligibility and interfaces with virtually all of the programs under the Department of Social Services.

The Food Stamp Program Bureau is located within the Division of Economic Security. Child Support Enforcement is a separate office under the Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Economic Security. Under Financial Assistance, there is a Welfare Management System Bureau that serves as a liaison between FSP, income support, field operations, and energy assistance and SSIS.

The Food Stamp Program is state-administered and county-operated, with New York City (NYC) considered to be a separate district, equating to a county. NYC handles between 70 and 80 percent of the total New York State caseload in any given year and has a separate WMS system to support it. The two systems in New York are referred to as upstate WMS (serving 57 districts) and downstate WMS, serving NYC (one district).

The State of New York is experiencing serious fiscal problems and the State Department of Social Services is currently at its 1983 staffing level.

Welfare advocacy groups and labor unions are very influential in New York and have considerable impact on DSS operations, especially in NYC.

Unemployment in New York was highest in 1976, with a level of 10.3 percent, and has generally declined from that date to 1988, reaching a low of 4.2 percent in 1988. Since 1988 the rate has increased, reaching 7.2 percent in 1991.

The October 1992 report, *The Fiscal Survey of States*, provides the following information compiled by the National Association of State Budget Officers:

- New York's nominal expenditure growth for Fiscal Year (FY) 1993 was between 0 and 4.9 percent; the national average for expenditure growth was 2.4 percent.
- New York reduced the 1992 State budget by $407 million after it was approved.
- State government employment levels in New York decreased by 3.37 percent. This change was much larger than the national average decrease of 0.60 percent in State government employment.
- New York implemented changes to increase revenues by $248 million for FY 1993. These changes included increases in sales taxes, personal and corporate income taxes, other taxes, and fees.
- The regional outlook indicated that the Northeast region was the most affected by the recession. Job losses in the Northeast region, 5.5 percent from June 1990 to 1992, were highest of all regions.

2.0 FOOD STAMP PROGRAM OPERATIONS

New York State is undergoing a reorganization that is changing the structure of field operations within the State. Under the new organization, there will be six districts -- Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Downstate, and New York City. Each district will be under the direction of a director of Field Operations at the district level. Each District will have from one to three teams with representatives from economic security, medical assistance, services, and systems. The six districts will report to the Division of Field Operations in Albany. Field Operations will probably be responsible for corrective action for food stamp errors, payment accuracy, and the development of reinvestment plans for the payment sanctions. As of September 1993, most of the districts were not yet staffed and most were still led by acting directors.

The Office of Quality Assurance and Audit has responsibility for quality control. Organized on a separate regional basis, it has permanent staff who provide on-going management reviews within the State.

2.1 Food Stamp Program Participation

Table 2.1 presents public assistance participation for the entire State of New York as supported by both WMS. Approximately 82 percent of the PA participants are located in New York City.

Table 2.1 Average Monthly Public Assistance Participation

Program	Participants	FY 92	FY 91	FY 90	FY 89	FY 88
AFDC	Cases	397,491	376,263	347,090	337,536	339,628
	Recipients	1,118,015	1,065,897	987,133	979,295	1,007,390
Foster Care[1]	Children	55,631	55,519	52,921	43,052	30,694
General Assistance	Cases	301,313	273,299	228,495	190,344	181,847
	Recipients	379,346	342,157	289,600	238,578	235,966
Food Stamp	Households	866,037	788,559	710,014	649,578	664,882
	Participants	1,904,581	1,755,804	1,586,063	1,456,493	1,519,598
Medicaid	Individuals	2,725,408	2,546,353	2,332,705	2,204,216	2,189,900

These figures represent cases that actually receive benefits; they do not reflect the total number of applicants. Approximately 29 percent of all applications for AFDC and food stamp benefits are denied. The average number of cases pending eligibility determination on a monthly basis is 10,264.

An aggressive outreach program has significantly increased the number of food stamp cases in which a household member receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) from the Social Security Administration (SSA). There is one borough in NYC that handles 105,000 SSI FSP-only cases. SSI recipients are categorically eligible for food stamps. The State has actively sought to increase this outreach program in the effort to reduce New York's GA outlays.

2.2 FSP Benefits Issued Versus FSP Administrative Costs

The ratio of benefits issued to FSP administrative costs has improved from 7.2:1 in 1988 to 11.7:1 in 1992.

New York's average monthly benefit issuance per household over the last five years, as provided in Table 2.2, has increased.[2]

[1] Not supported by WMS.

[2] The number of households and benefit amounts use data reported in the FNS *State Activity Reports* for each year.

Table 2.2 FSP Benefits Issued

	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
Average Monthly Benefit Per Household	$154.52	$138.35	$130.03	$119.23	$113.20

2.3 FSP Administrative Costs

New York's Food Stamp Program administrative costs for the past five years are provided in Table 2.3.[3] Both total cost and average cost per household have fluctuated over this period.

Table 2.3 FSP Federal Administrative Costs

	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
Total FSP Federal Admin. Cost	$135,157,431	$125,517,130	$129,881,080	$129,718,570	$125,510,654
Avg. Federal Admin. Cost Per Household Per Month	$13.16	$13.46	$15.56	$16.62	$15.62

2.4 System Impacts on Program Performance

Automated systems impact upon program performance is limited to those areas where increased efficiency in handling the work flow necessitated by program rules, regulations, and policy may be measured.

Other areas of increased efficiency may, in fact, increase the workload of the line level employee because of the increased information available to them through automated systems.

[3] The number of households and FSP Federal administrative costs are derived from data reported in the FNS *State Activity Reports* for each year.

The following areas were addressed with regard to system impact on program performance:

- Staffing
- Responsiveness to regulatory change
- Combined official payment error rates
- Claims collection
- Certification/reviews

2.4.1 Staffing

The State indicated that total staffing has increased over the past five years, however, no specific figures were provided to show the extent of impact the automated system has had upon staffing levels. During this same period, the average monthly caseload per worker decreased and the case backlog increased. State staff indicated that the reason for the backlog could be related to the increasing requirements placed on local offices.

New York reports an average monthly number of 10,264 cases pending.

2.4.2 Responsiveness to Regulatory Change

Of the 14 regulations shown in Exhibit A-2.1, three were not applicable to the State of New York. Of the regulations that were applicable, the State indicated it implemented these on time. Only four regulations required system changes. When the State implements a change, it issues a General Information System (GIS) message that is broadcast on WMS to all counties, directing them to implement the regulation. The counties generally implement on time, at the time of client recertification. To comply with the State's Administrative Procedures Act, the State cannot issue a state directive to all counties until the State regulation has been amended. This generally takes about nine months. WMS cannot be changed until the regulation has been changed. Meanwhile, the State puts out a GIS message informing the counties of the Federal requirement, but the State does not know whether the counties implement the regulation until a Quality Control audit is conducted. Because the system design is based primarily on turn around documents (TAD) prepared manually by the workers for submittal to data entry, the worker is able to make many regulatory changes manually. Any system modification must go through the Systems Planning Process (SPP), which involves the development of user requirements, design specifications, a detailed design document, and approval, if there is a cost impact. The State would like more time to implement changes, including mass changes. The State received the food stamp changes in mid-August for implementation in October, which the State considers to be too little time.

2.4.3 Combined Official Payment Error Rates

New York's error rates have been fairly high for the past five years, increasing to 15.24 percent in 1989 from 12.84 percent in 1988. Since 1989, the rates have decreased, and as of August 1993, were running at 11.2 percent. New York's sanctions for 1992 were

$339,000, reduced from $14,000,000 as a result of quality control reform in the Food Stamp Program.

Table 2.4 Official Combined Error Rate

	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
Combined Error Rate	11.20	10.87	13.88	15.24	12.84

A corrective action plan has been implemented in 10 upstate counties and NYC. Some errors are statewide and some are citywide (referring to NYC). In the past, there has been a rather diffuse approach to corrective action. State staff indicated that corrective action has become more focused, and as a result, error rates have been dropping. Some actions that have been taken include:

- Implementation of a Quarterly Reporting System (instead of monthly reporting) for earned income clients. New York has received a waiver to allow clients to report changes only when there is a change. Changes were made in WMS to support these program changes.

- Additional edits were made to the case file and the Automated Budgeting and Eligibility Logic (ABEL) subsystem to reduce calculation errors made during budgeting.

- An enumeration and validation process for Social Security Numbers (SSNs) was implemented. New York has a proposal in process to conduct an on-line match for SSNs to eliminate this error. Vital Statistics and the Department of Health will check name and address statistics (to be implemented in 1994).

- The Income Eligibility and Verification System (IEVS) has helped to reduce errors, but in some cases more than 45 days are required to resolve some of the discrepancies.

- A future enhancement of the ABEL subsystem, in the Income Resource Collection System, will include Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) matches.

There is an indirect relationship between the system support of caseworkers and error rates. System improvements that result in time savings will help error rates, but there is no direct attribution to error reduction through time saving improvements. There is a plan to implement a one-page recertification form reflecting 10 key areas that will help avoid errors. This has been manually tested with good results and will soon be pilot tested. A notice telling the client what to bring in for recertification will also help.

A project that is still in the planning/development stage is the conceptual transfer of Nassau County's Electronic Eligibility Decision Support Subsystem (EEDSS). If approved for development, EEDSS will provide an interactive interviewing capability and is designed to reduce error rates. FNS approval for this enhancement has not yet been received and questions remain concerning the level of integration and implementation time frames.

Another enhancement, also not yet fully funded, is the new Client Notice System (CNS) for automated notice preparation which will eliminate the need for manual preparation of notices. Its implementation is expected to reduce errors as well as client requests for fair hearings.

2.4.4 Claims Collection

Table 2.5 presents claims collection data indicating the total value of claims established and collected and the percentage of claims established that were collected. During the 1988 to 1992 period, the dollar value of claims established and claims collected rose gradually. New York's claims collected as a percentage of claims established fluctuated over this time period, but generally increased.

Table 2.5 Total Claims Established/Collected

	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988
Total Claims Established	$13,548,603	$14,345,193	$13,247,028	$9,9504,004	$11,820,081
Total Claims Collected	$5,961,378	$4,890,833	$4,324,944	$3,898,392	$4,762,375
As a % of Total Claims Established	43.9%	34.1%	32.6%	41.0%	31.8%

Information concerning claims collection in NYC is presented in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 NYC Claims History

Description*	FY 93	FY 92	FY 91	FY 90	FY 89
Claims Established and Unresolved	53,875**	65,626	68,850	69,730	62,670
Cases in Recoupment Status	12,754**	14,229	12,699	12,125	8,767
Dollars recouped in FY	$2,800,000	$2,700,000	$2,300,000	$1,900,000	$1,700,000

* Includes Public Assistance and Non-Public Assistance Food Stamp Cases
** As of June

The number of claims established after 1989 decreased because those cases that were closed and never recouped were purged from the personal computer (PC) tracking system after two years. In a few pilot efforts in NYC, centers have begun targeting certain cases that tend to have an increased likelihood of overpayment as well as high dollar amounts. The average claim value has increased in recent years from around $400 to $500 per claim. The claims system for NYC is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.0 below.

2.4.5 Certification/Reviews

The State of New York has never received Family Assistance Management Information System (FAMIS) certification or Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approval of its systems. The State is continuing to create subsystems and make enhancements that could lead to regulatory compliance. A 1992 Model Plan Review conducted by FNS revealed a number of deficiencies; e.g., no automated case closure in NYC and duplicate issuances. Although the system can perform automatic case closure in the event a client does not appear for recertification or provide information that is required, this action is not taken as a matter of policy. According to the State, the fact that a client does not appear for the required interview or provide the requisite information does not mean that this person is no longer needy and, since State law requires that the State provide assistance to the needy, WMS cannot automatically close the case. The State has been successfully sued for cutting off benefits when they were still needed. Once client notices have been automated, State staff believe that the State will be in a better position to avoid law suits by advocacy groups and may be less hesitant to close cases automatically.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE SYSTEM

Two separate systems and databases support the Food Stamp Program in New York. Both systems are operated and maintained by State personnel and modifications are coordinated as much as possible to minimize system differences. While the long term goal of the State is to have one system, the size of the NYC caseload and the complexity of the NYC environment continues to require two separate systems for eligibility determination and benefit calculation. With the implementation of a statewide issuance system, a major step in meeting the statewide system objective will be taken. The description of functionality below addresses WMS as one system, except where differences exist between the upstate and downstate systems. New York City is further supported in some of its functions by an IBM mainframe that is operated and maintained by Human Resource Administration (HRA) employees.

The upstate and downstate WMS systems have two separate databases and different (but very similar) application codes. A feature that exists in one system does not automatically exist in the other system.

All changes to the systems supporting the Food Stamp Program must go through the Systems Planning Process (referred to as SPP and discussed in greater detail in Section 6.0). All WMS changes are made by programmers in Albany. There is no programming staff supporting WMS in New York City although State WMS Data Center Operations staff are on-site in NYC. The City does continue to utilize its IBM mainframe system for a variety of functions, including the development of extract files and reporting.

Cases are defined as follows:

- A case that combines public assistance, food stamps and medical assistance (MA) is considered one case. If there is an additional person who receives food stamps only in this household, however, upstate WMS considers this two cases. The downstate WMS would count this as one case.

- A food stamp-only case that is receiving medical assistance, but not public assistance, is considered two cases.

- A public assistance case that does not receive food stamps, but receives medical assistance is considered one case.

State staff indicated that this approach to defining cases does not have an impact on WMS.

3.1 System Functionality

The upstate WMS operates in 57 counties (referred to as districts in the State of New York). New York City has a separate WMS, referred to as the downstate or NYC WMS.

Since FSP is county-operated in New York, WMS is designed to accommodate some county differences, in terms of local reporting and the calculation of benefits, since there are some differences in energy and shelter allowances. District staffing responsibilities differ and the utilization of generic versus specialized workers also varies.

Work is organized in NYC and most upstate counties by program type:

- Public assistance workers work food stamp cases as a part of the PA application. These workers do not handle non-PA (NPA) FSP-only cases or Medicaid-only, which is automatic for public assistance cases. Most of the caseload falls into this category. These clients must go to another caseworker (in New York City, they go to another office) to complete their application for FSP or Medicaid.

- Food stamp-only workers do not handle AFDC or Medicaid applicants. The majority of their caseload is the SSI recipient population. These are generally elderly citizens who do not qualify for other aid.

- Medicaid-only workers are specialized workers who do not handle other programs.

In some NYC offices, PA workers handle persons receiving SSI. In a few upstate counties, PA workers also do FSP-only cases.

Some counties also group workers by intake and on-going (referred to as undercare cases in NYC workers, depending upon the composition and caseloads of a particular office).

The major impact of this organizational structure is its effect on the client population. In New York City, for instance, a client who applies at a PA office but does not qualify for PA must go to another office to apply for food stamps and to yet another office to apply for Medicaid. In New York City, there are 40 PA welfare centers and 20 food stamp-only centers.

Terminals are used by caseworkers for inquiry and budgeting. If and when interactive interviewing (the EEDSS Project) is implemented, terminals will be placed in interviewing locations and will be used for the intake interview initially, eventually including the recertification interview as well.

- ***Registration.*** Both WMSs employ essentially the same process for registering applicants on the system. Terminals are used to register applications. The minimum information required to register an applicant is name and address (if available). Other information that is included in the registration process, if provided, includes: sex, race, date of birth, and SSN. At registration, the worker enters language preference (English/Spanish), district office, worker identification, date of application, and type of assistance. Up to 20 individuals can be entered at the time of case registration. The worker determines the people in the household who comprise the relevant unit for each assistance program.

When the application is registered, workers inquire on-line to the database in which they are working, upstate WMS or downstate WMS. If the applicant is currently participating, the upstate worker that finds a Client Identification Number (CIN) can identify the district in which the case is currently active. If it is the worker's district, the case file can be transferred to the caseworker. If the case is in another upstate district, the worker can see the last WMS budget. If there is reason to believe the case is active elsewhere (as in NYC) the upstate worker can inquire on the downstate WMS. If a CIN is present in the NYC database, the upstate worker can call NYC to look at the case information and information will be provided to the worker over the phone.

Currently, upstate workers do not generally make inquires of the downstate WMS. The downstate WMS has a cross-machine clearance function, but this feature is optional. If a CIN is identified in the other system's database, a designated employee in the center is assigned the responsibility of making further inquiries in the county designated.

A search is conducted for each member of the household to determine whether the individual is known to WMS, regardless of whether the individual is a member of an active case or whether the case has been closed. Although all historical client and case information is not maintained in the system, a subset of client information has been maintained since the system became operational. If the individual appears in a case that has been inactive for less than 30 days, the old case can be reactivated and changes are permitted to the case to update the information. If the case has been closed for longer than 30 days, the number of changes that can be made are limited.

If the client has a SSN, the system will clear on the SSN and date of birth. Otherwise, it clears on the name. The purpose of the clearance is to obtain a CIN for the individual who may be located in the database. A registry number is generated by the system when the case is registered. This number is used as long as the case is pending until eligibility has been determined and the application information has been entered into the system. At this point, a case number is assigned by the local district office.

As part of the automated clearance process, a clearance report is produced at the time of registration. The CIN appears on the clearance report if the client is known to WMS. The worker must confirm that the individual identified by CIN in the database is the same individual that is being registered. If there are multiple individuals, the worker must resolve whether any of the individuals on this list is the client who is applying for benefits. Once the potential duplicates have been resolved, a clearance report is produced and placed in the case file. A TAD also

interview, wage reporting, Unemployment Insurance, and Social Security number matching is performed.

In the downstate WMS, workers must use a suffix number if there are multiple assistance groups in a case.

Screeners are used to identify cases that require expedited service based on an Expedited Food Stamp Screening Sheet (DSS-3938 Rev. 6/91). Expedited services screening is now performed manually, but DSS plans to automate this process.

- ***Eligibility Determination.*** IEVS matching is performed the night of application registry, prior to conducting the interview. If there are hits during IEVS, this information is printed out for the worker who can then resolve the IEVS hits during the client interview.

  During and after the interview, upstate workers use a Certification Guide, a 12-page guide for collecting household information and indicating the document by which household information has been verified; NYC workers use a similar form. These forms are used for PA, Medicaid, and Food Stamps.

  If workers need additional documentation after all of the household information has been collected and verified, they complete a Documentation Requirements Form (DSS-2641), a check-off list that is provided to the client showing what documentation remains to be provided. This form will eventually be automated (in the planning stage) for presentation to the client at the end of the interview. Verification request forms that are sent to employers, landlords, etc. will also be produced automatically, if the EEDSS enhancements are implemented, with the necessary information already filled in. WMS does not have fields for indicating that a verification has been performed, nor will EEDSS have mandatory verification. WMS verifies the validity of the SSNs.

  DSS does not employ interactive interviewing. A single application form is completed by the applicant for the three major programs; verifications and computer matching are then performed. New York City's application is essentially the same as the upstate form with only slight differences.

  Once the worker has the necessary information to calculate the budget, the household budget is calculated based on the income of each individual within the household. A PA/FS Budget Form is available that workers may use before accessing the on-line budget calculation option. Workers, however, routinely enter the budget information into the system directly from the Certification Form (upstate) and Application (downstate). This information is always entered by a worker, not by clerical staff. The individual budget information is linked to the registration information on the individual by the initial line number used in the registration.

The budget is saved in WMS, but because the budget calculation module was developed after the initial WMS, the link to the WMS record is the line number of the individual, as entered during registration, not the CIN. The Budget Subsystem (referred to as ABEL for AFDC and food stamps) was added to WMS upstate approximately 15 years ago.

Recoupments are handled in the upstate system through the budgeting screen. An income history is maintained as well so that when matches with the Department of Taxation are performed, the record is not flagged if the income has already been reported. The budgeting system is also used for mass re-budgeting.

The budget information is entered into the PA budget screen, although the budget for food stamps and PA is calculated separately. There are some variations in the calculation of food stamp budgets within the individual districts and some additional budget information required for food stamps. The income that is the same for both programs, however, only needs to be entered one time. (This process is different for NYC.) Benefits are determined on the budget calculation screens and the worker confirms the benefit calculations. The budget is printed and maintained in the case folder.

Although the automated budgeting module of WMS is an on-line function, workers must leave their desks to enter data into the budgeting system. The budgeting system calculates the budget based on information in the application form or from other documentation.

After the budget is completed, and the worker has determined that the client is eligible, the worker writes the remaining application and budget information onto TAD which is sent to data entry. In some smaller offices, the eligibility worker may enter the data. There are seven screens that are used for application entry. There are immediate on-line edits of data entered into the application system and the worker can return to any of the screens to correct erroneous information. A printed code book is used by the worker to enter codes into TAD. Based on the application and budget results, the worker determines client eligibility and the system calculates the benefits.

Benefits are authorized when the worker enters the budget calculation and application data into TAD for data entry. In NYC, when the worker inputs the benefit version number, benefits are authorized.

The application data and benefit amount go through a batch update process, after which the authorization turnaround document will be printed with all of the information. This is placed into the case file. After the application information has been entered, the application is batch processed by the Benefit Issuance and Control Subsystem (BICS), a post-authorization system for payment issuance.

- ***Benefit Calculation.*** Benefit calculation is performed automatically by the system based on data entered.

- ***Benefit Issuance.*** Benefit authorization is transmitted electronically to authorized issuance locations. The benefits are issued upon presentation of a Common Benefit Issuance Card (CBIC) and entry of a personal identification number (PIN). Upstate only requires a PIN at this time.

  The Electronic Benefit Issuance Control System (EBICS) currently serves the upstate counties; once it is implemented statewide, the State will have the capability to issue benefits within one day of eligibility determination. Although WMS can issue benefits within Federal time frames, the State experiences occasional failures to issue expedited benefits within five days, due to the local worker's failure to take action.

  The following systems support PA and food stamp benefit issuance.

  - Upstate New York - BICS performs reconciliation and reporting and EBICS provides for benefit issuance at 1,329 authorized retailer locations. Monroe County has a food stamp cash out pilot program for elderly, SSI, and Child Assistance Program (CAP) clients.

  - New York City - The Electronic Payment Funds Transfer (EPFT) system supports food stamp issuance in New York City.

  Because the two existing systems are quite different, both the upstate and downstate systems are described below. The State will be implementing EBICS statewide under a new contract in 1994. At that time, changes will be required in EBICS to accommodate the New York City environment.

  Upstate New York Issuance - EBICS

  Benefit issuance is based on the use of a magnetic stripe identification card. The card is used for public and medical assistance as well as the issuance of food stamps and has a black and white (low quality) digital image. For expedited issuance, a temporary card is issued by the worker until a permanent card is received in the mail 14 days later. At this time, the system does not track the number of replacement cards, nor is there a charge for card replacement. BICS can display the entire issuance history (for FSP/PA/MA) on-line. The worker can also identify the store where coupons were issued, issuance date, and recipient card number.

  Issuance is staggered over the first nine days of the month for food stamps (upstate). PA issuance occurs during the first 9 days with FSP issuance and from the 16th to the 24th of the month. Special and expedited issuances are transmitted to the issuance contractor twice a day.

Issuance reporting occurs centrally. The 57 upstate counties are not involved in this process since all issuance functions (with the exception of the issuance of a temporary card) are state-operated.

EBICS is an on-line food coupon issuance system. Retailers that issue food coupons access the host issuance file maintained by Citicorp via point of sale (POS) terminals. There are now 1,329 merchants that are linked to the host computer via dedicated phone lines. The recipient presents the magnetic card to the retailer who swipes the card, the client enters a PIN, and the host computer tells the retailer how many coupon books and in what denomination to issue to the client.

The State rigidly maintains inventory controls and selects only those retailers that meet the criteria for participation. Each retailer must have a local phone line, adequate space for the terminal and safe, adequate electricity, and liability and crime insurance. The State provides coupons in break trays containing small coupon inventories to prevent coupon loss. Citicorp installs and maintains the retailer equipment at no cost to the retailer. Lastly, the merchant will not be considered for participation in the program if it has ever been disqualified as an authorized retailer by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The retailer sends back to Citicorp a settlement transaction on the coupons issued. This is balanced against the coupon inventory control system. Both the recipient and retailer are provided a receipt of the issuance.

The recipient also receives public assistance benefits in cash at the retailer location and uses the card at pharmacies, physician offices, and hospitals for medical assistance. The card provides access to the Electronic Medical Eligibility Verification system (EMEVS), operated by another contractor (CSC and Deluxe Data Services).

Citicorp's subcontractor, Monetary Management, has a crime prevention program working with retailers to prevent potential fraud and crime.

Each retailer signs a contract with Citicorp, which pays issuers on a sliding scale depending on the issuance volume. Citicorp provides 30 field representatives around the State, an 800 phone number for reporting problems, and training in both English and Spanish.

Not all issuances are currently meeting the 30-day standard for issuance. For April 1993, 9.6 percent of PA/FSP cases exceeded the standard and 10.4 percent of food stamp-only cases exceeded the standard. In May 1993, 14.2 percent of PA/FSP cases exceeded standards and 11.9 percent of food stamp-only cases exceeded the standard. These statistics do not include New York City.

Downstate New York Issuance - EPFT

The EPFT system was implemented in NYC in 1985 when magnetically encoded cards were issued to all PA and FSP recipients and benefits were distributed electronically. This system utilizes 440 check cashers and bank branches in NYC, but is not fully present in all areas and its hours of access are limited. Benefits are issued on a staggered basis using two 12-day cycles per month. EPFT uses photo ID and a written signature instead of a PIN to receive benefits. After EBICS is implemented statewide, EPFT will be superseded and the entire State will utilize PINs.

- ***Notices.*** Client notices are prepared manually by workers. DSS is in the process of developing an automated Client Notice System (CNS) that will provide text regarding the reason for the notice as well as welfare advocacy information (in NYC). Client notices are to be developed and implemented one type at a time. Automated notices will be provided by CNS for FSP, AFDC, and Medicaid.

- ***Claims System.*** Because there is a requirement in NYC to send the client two notices of an overpayment, a separate system had to be developed that could track the notices before the claim was entered into WMS. Once an underpayment or overpayment has been identified, the worker prepares a claim form for collections. If the client was underpaid, the worker will make the adjustment and authorize an increase in the benefit amount.

  The recoupment claim forms are sent to the EPFT Office, where the claim information is entered into a PC that is not linked to WMS and a demand notice (indicating the amount of the overpayment that is owed to the City) is prepared manually and sent to the client.

  If the case remains active, a second notice of adverse action is sent automatically 30 days later, at which time the claim is established in WMS and recoupment is selected so that the system will reduce the benefit amount automatically in the next issuance. If the case has been closed, the second notice is not sent, unless and until the case is reactivated. Once the claim is established on WMS, the claim status is tracked, but if the case is closed before the second notice of adverse action is sent, the tracking is performed only on the separate PC system. The EPFT Office receives an extract file from the city's IBM mainframe on a monthly basis against which the file of cases that have been closed are matched against the PC file to determine whether any of the closed cases have been reopened. Any cases that have been reopened for which the first notice was sent will then be sent the second notice, following which recoupment can begin.

  Many overpayments are identified through wage reporting and the case is subsequently closed because too much income has been earned. The major problems with the current claims collection process are:

- New York City must send two notices. During the 30 days before the second notice is sent, many of the cases are closed and the second recoupment notice cannot be sent.

- A claim is not established in WMS until after the second notice is sent, requiring a separate PC-based system for tracking the first notices and identifying cases requiring a second notice.

- Manually prepared notices are work intensive.

Two efforts that are underway in New York should help this process. The first is the automated client notice system, which has not yet received full State funding, and the second is an effort to provide increased access to the WMS database.

- ***Computer Matching.*** The State utilizes a targeting strategy for matching. The system utilizes SSNs or name derivatives if SSNs are not available. Matches are conducted with the Department of Labor for unemployment insurance benefits, with the Department of Taxation and Finance for income from employment, and with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for interest on unearned income.

  Although workers do not automatically check the database of the other WMS, the two databases are periodically matched to identify any duplicate applicants.

- ***Alerts.*** WMS does not provide on-line alerts to workers; however, upstate workers receive bi-weekly reports of anticipated future actions.

- ***Monthly Reporting.*** New York does not have monthly reporting. Instead, the State performs quarterly reporting for selected cases that involve earned income. Recertifications are performed every six months. Workers enter changes onto a TAD or directly into a terminal. TAD is also used to enter the required code for any notices and the type of notice.

- ***Report Generation.*** WMS has an off-line reporting capability that allows for ad hoc reporting from flat files. All FNS reports must be prepared manually from upstate and downstate reports. WMS automatically produces daily reports to EWs listing outstanding work needing attention.

- ***Program Management and Administration.*** New York State offers an office automation function that is supported by the mainframe. This is separate from WMS and is an option that counties may select if they have the required equipment. Office automation is intended to support supervisors and other management personnel. The county must pay for the equipment upgrade to utilize office automation. It exists in all counties, but not necessarily in all sites.

There is also a General Information System that was implemented fairly early to give counties messages regarding policy changes, system issues, and reminders.

The Fair Hearing System is one of the WMS subsystems that serves both the upstate and downstate districts. Approximately 150,000 requests are received each year for a fair hearing. Because New York has a large volume of hearings and court cases, the Fair Hearing System was developed to track these cases.

The system tracks a fair hearing request from the time it is taken on the phone or received in writing. This system tracks the documentation, notices, schedules, and changes in personnel. It is a State system that is operated by the Office of Administrative Hearings. There is local district access to the system although not all units within a district have access to the system to obtain the history on fair hearings in the State. Intake workers use the system to verify information. It will be tied into the Client Notice System that is under development. Eventually, the plan is to take the fair hearing request on-line. The system maintains a two-year history.

3.2 Level of Integration/Complexity

Integration occurs at various levels within the State:

- ***Organizational Level.*** Within the State organizational structure, all of the welfare programs that are supported by WMS are directed and managed by one organization, DSS. Both AFDC and FSP are under the Division of Economic Security and the Medicaid Program is managed by the Division of Health and Long Term Care. WMS also comes under the direction of DSS, facilitating the management of the system. Because the State is county-operated, the level of coordination makes the overall system management more complex. This is especially true for New York City, with 80 percent of the State's caseload.

- ***WMS System Level.*** WMS is not fully integrated; there are two separate systems with two separate data centers that support upstate and downstate. There is one group at the State level that provides programming and maintenance support, but the coordination effort is still considerable.

- ***Application Form Level.*** Welfare programs are integrated at the application level; one application is used for Medicaid, AFDC, and FSP. However, New York City's application form has some minor differences.

- ***Worker Level.*** At the worker level, there are varying levels of integration. Each district organizes work according to its own requirements and, as a result, there are generic caseworkers, food stamp-only caseworkers, and Medicaid-only caseworkers throughout the State.

- ***WMS Database Level.*** At the WMS database level, each system has a fully integrated database in terms of assistance programs, although the two systems have separate databases. The two databases are matched monthly, but duplicate participation and, hence, duplicate issuances are still possible.

- ***WMS Application Code Level.*** Some modules and subsystems are fully integrated for all programs. Others are completely separate. For instance, although benefit issuance upstate is integrated at the client level, there is a separate system that supports Medicaid benefit disbursement.

There is a relatively high degree of integration overall for each of the systems. However, the complexity of managing WMS is increased because of the need to maintain separate operations and maintenance infrastructures for each. Further, the basic WMS that was first developed for eligibility determination has been enhanced over the years to bring the system in compliance with Federal regulations. There does not appear to be one cohesive plan for WMS automation for the entire State.

3.3 Workstation/Caseworker Ratio

Currently, caseworkers do not have workstations on their desks. Each unit of four to five workers shares one terminal for registration, clearance, inquiry, and maintenance functions. Data entry workers use terminals to enter the turn around documents.

The ratio is expected to improve with the purchase of additional terminals and the replacement of the existing terminals with faster machines. The ratio will eventually become 1.5 workers per terminal.

3.4 Current Automation Issues

The New York State WMS provides a minimum degree of automation in support of FSP workers. New York is faced with a number of automation issues, but due to budget constraints, a cautious approach is being taken in making system enhancements. Some of the efforts underway, to one extent or another, include:

- Automation of client notices (phased development and implementation)
- Automation of the intake interview process (planning)
- Increased access to the WMS database (planning)
- Statewide implementation of a single issuance system (RFP stage)
- Improvement in the cross-machine match process (planning)

New York is conducting pilot projects throughout the State, dealing with activities such as targeting error prone cases and issuing client notices. Some of the planned improvements are presented in more detail in Section 4.3, Development and Implementation Activities.

The existence of two separate systems within the State provides continuing challenges to DSS in systems management and program operations in the State.

4.0 SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

New York State is undertaking a number of development and implementation activities that will improve worker productivity and facilitate the management of both WMSs.

4.1 Overview of the Existing System

In 1975-76, 36 counties in upstate New York had systems with varying degrees of automation and data collection, and various hardware configurations. The remaining 21 counties were still manual. Nassau County had the most advanced system of the upstate counties, with an extensive report system on PCs. The larger counties had specialized workers and specialized forms for each program. In fact, some had specialized forms for each process within each program. Many of these forms have been automated, depending on the state of automation of the county.

The previous New York City system was IBM-based. This system used suffix codes for individuals that associated them with their respective program. The suffix structure was adopted in WMS to accommodate New York City and facilitate the conversion of cases from the IBM system.

In many ways, the New York WMS is still evolving. The city, for example, is currently implementing a notice component for non-PA food stamp cases, an automatic closure component, and real time eligibility determination/benefit calculation. Additionally, replacing the 10 to 15 year-old Unisys 4000 controllers with Intel 486 computers will provide increased computing resources and a technological platform for growth and increased productivity.

The downstate WMS utilizes distributive processing. Each site contains a cluster controller, video display terminals (VDT), a character printer, a line printer, and a processor with a hard drive for storage. The current processors (4000) use COBOL and are being upgraded to Unisys 6000s which are UNIX-based processors. Worker mode programs and edits reside on each site processor/controller. Information entered locally is stored temporarily on the hard disk until it is sent to the mainframe. Input is data entry mode or worker mode. The worker mode is used for application inquiries, clearance, and budgeting and is on line to the host processor. Processing is immediate for the clearance function and for turn around documents.

The data entry mode has extensive local edits and is used for entering the results of eligibility determination, on-going case management, recertifications, and single and special benefit issuances. These functions require overnight processing and the results are available the next working day. Up to twenty-five transactions at a time are sent to the

host following supervisor review. A transaction in this case is defined as an entire function.

The mainframe is available from 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. for worker use. The host mainframe can receive data from the local sites throughout the working day.

The database is integrated for public assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid eligibility. It is possible to check the upstate WMS for existing participants. The worker makes inquiries to see if a client is participating in any other district in the State.

Over the past 15 years, the city and the rest of the State have alternated implementing enhancements to their respective systems. More recently, enhancements have been implemented in the State first and then NYC. The State's rationale for this is that since the upstate region has only 30 percent of the State caseload, any mistakes will have much less of an impact on the State's error rate. On the other hand, any improvements that an enhancement may cause will not be reflected in the State's overall productivity and error statistics until the process is implemented in NYC.

4.2 Justification for System Improvements

There are three major efforts underway to improve WMS: the Client Notice System, the EEDSS, and the statewide EBICS. The justification for each of these is described below.

CNS - The proposed Client Notice System would provide automated notice preparation, thus eliminating the need for manual preparation of notices. Its implementation is expected to reduce errors as well as reduce the number of client requests for fair hearings.

EEDSS - The Electronic Eligibility Decision Support Subsystem, a conceptual transfer of the Nassau County System, will provide an interactive interviewing capability and is designed to reduce the error rates.

Statewide EBICS - The Electronic Benefits Issuance Control System will provide a statewide on-line benefits issuance system, increasing efficiency and reducing duplication.

4.3 Development and Implementation Activities

WMS was mandated by the State legislature in 1976 when it authorized the Department of Social Services to develop a statewide welfare system. The initial WMS staff was drawn completely from State personnel (not NYC or upstate local office staff), who used computing resources from the New York State Central Data Processing Facility and procured the necessary hardware and a dedicated computer site. A standing committee, comprised of local office staff, met regularly and provided input. The system was pilot tested in three counties in 1978.

The NYC system has had three support groups. Initially, Grumann Data Systems developed the system with assistance from NYC staff. Support then passed to NYC staff.

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In 1992 or 1993, the State cut the funding for the 33 programmers from NYC assigned to WMS and absorbed the NYC WMS support.

CNS. Neither upstate nor downstate WMS provides automated client noti

4.4 Conversion Approach

When the State implemented WMS in NYC it was the first time that the on-line database had a connection to the claims database. NYC MIS developed a programmatic link and generated 900 cases the first month. Each month an additional 200 to 300 cases continued to be generated through this match.

The NYC system had suffix codes for individuals that associated them with their respective program. State staff indicated that multiple suffix identifiers were the biggest problem in conversion. In cases with multiple suffixes, it was difficult to ascertain how each individual related to the overall case.

Conversion was manual in over half the counties. Some counties, e.g. Nassau and Monroe, had client files that could be used to build a skeletal client/case record. These counties had some automated conversion assistance which, however, entailed a conversion from the IBM EBCDIC to Unisys internal format. The data elements were mapped and the system did the conversion. Approximately $17 to $18 million dollars were saved the first year by automated conversion, according to State estimates.

4.5 Project Management

The State personnel felt strongly that the Project Director should be a person with a programming background. They felt that this enhances accountability and better assures that the specifications will be complete and delivered on time. The original Project Manager was from MIS and had extensive background in large systems development in the private sector prior to joining the State. This "large project" experience provided him with the organizational skill to utilize a team approach from the beginning. One particularly useful ingredient in his background was the experience of managing many contractors and unifying their efforts. He was 100 percent dedicated to the project and reported to the Deputy Commissioner for MIS. The same key players were on the project for its duration with the exception of the Project Manager. He left in 1976 and was replaced by a project manager who remained until 1992.

A new group was created to bridge the Policy and MIS interface. Its key ingredients were knowledge of the welfare program and familiarity with the various county organizations. This organization still exists and is the source of all specifications and test criteria going to MIS technical staff. The group currently is comprised of four staff, all from a field position. It is in charge of all project development, user specifications, and budget requirements for the system.

There were three project management committees:

- The Oversight Committee interfaced with advocacy groups, Federal agencies, the State legislature, district legislative commissions, and county legislative commissions. This committee also set priorities and provided overall direction to the project.

- The Management Committee did the budget and planning and interfaced with the other deputies and county management. It was also part of the overall Steering Committee.

- The User Committee Coordinated communication with the County Program groups from the counties and districts and within the State Program Department. They also met daily to develop specifications for the Social Services Information Systems (SSIS) group and defined the data element dictionary. Most staff on the project came from the counties, including some programming staff.

There were approximately 20 staff on the core development team; five each from FSP, AFDC, Medicaid; one from financial management and the rest from the field.
The maximum number of State staff on the project at any one time was approximately 70. This was augmented by SDC contract analysts. No outside programmers were used in the system. The State used external contractors mostly for implementation tasks, e.g., site preparation, telecommunications line installation, building modifications, etc. Much of the training effort was performed by contractor staff.

4.6 FSP Participation

FSP personnel were involved in the planning, development, and implementation phases of WMS to a limited degree. There were five FSP personnel on the core development team, but the SSIS group was the major participant in the system development activities.

4.7 MIS Participation

The Project Manager reported to the Deputy Commissioner of Social Services for MIS. A MIS group interacts with the analyst group (WMS Bureau) from Program to implement PA policy in automated systems. Over 80 MIS staff were on the development project at the peak of involvement.

MIS augmented its staff with contract help from Systems Data Corporation (SDC) to back fill and maintain the ongoing system whenever necessary throughout the development.

4.8 Problems Encountered During Development and Implementation

Major problems during development stemmed from the State's inexperience with systems of this magnitude and complexity. For example, since the State lacked the expertise to specify, request, and monitor a system with this diverse a combination of skills and technical involvement, the RFP approval was delayed, which set implementation back several months.

After Unisys won the hardware bid the State discovered that the utilities, telecommunications software and hardware, and third party products were not as plentiful for the Unisys environment as the State was used to under IBM. The State had to

develop many of its own utilities, including modems, to accommodate the Unisys environment. This added to the project time and cost.

The statewide implementation encountered a number of diverse problems, including:

- Obsolete wiring
- Antiquated buildings
- Local zoning, digging, and building permits
- Labor union restrictions
- Conflicting property responsibilities (state, county, private).

Implementation costs were many times higher than planned.

There was also considerable resistance among the NYC operations staff to the new system. Since their primary experience had been with IBM, they were concerned that the advent of a Unisys system might result in job losses. Initially, because the workers in NYC had to be trained and the cases converted, a backlog of applications developed. NYC and the State were sued because many clients were not receiving benefits on time.

Budget cuts and hiring freezes have hampered the State's ability to continue development and maintenance of the two systems. The State has not allowed new hires for eight years. Additional legislation, such as that regarding CSE, pass through, IEVS, and welfare reform, require resources that must be drawn from existing staff. Enhancements, such as those related to client notices, have been on the drawing board for years as a direct result of these adverse staffing patterns.

The logistics and politics of implementing a statewide system in a State where counties and unions have much power and advocacy groups are extremely active in oversight, has caused many problems. This is in contrast to other county-operated States, such as Ohio, where only a few counties are influential enough to affect implementation.

For assistance programs and/or cost components (e.g., FSP administrative costs) that are funded equally by the State and Federal governments, counties in New York contribute 25 percent of the total funding. The State and Federal governments contribute 25 percent and 50 percent, respectively. The counties, therefore, can exert significant power.

WMS has some individual county variations that increase the complexity of the system and contributed to development delays. To get some counties to "buy in" to the system, the State needed to develop local reports in many instances.

Another issue hampering the start of WMS was the question of what to do with the 36 individual county systems that existed at the time. This issue involves questions of how to integrate the county data, whether to interface with the existing systems or develop a new systems to replace them, and how to politically persuade the counties to accept a new State system if their systems were to be outmoded.

One of the first issues associated with WMS development was related to confidentiality. A Task Force on Confidentiality was formed to address these issues because "the State stores vast amounts of data" and the issues of individuality "transcend WMS."

5.0 TRANSFERABILITY

Initially the State reviewed the Texas, Michigan, and Pennsylvania systems. No system existed in 1976 or 1977 that was suitable for New York, with its high population and strong county-operation environment. Nassau County, New York, was also used as a model for part of the development.

As the various components evolved over time, New York visited and looked at counties in California, Michigan, Oklahoma, and Illinois. It also reviewed Pennsylvania's decentralized approach and New Jersey's decentralized system.

Pennsylvania and New York continue to consult on technology and program issues as necessary. Many of the utilities for the system, particularly the telecommunications portion have been written by the State since Unisys does not have the extensive utility libraries and third party development attention that IBM has. Therefore, there was less commercially available software for the State to use.

The State used Delaware as its model for the notices component.

Due to its Unisys architecture, the age of the system, and the specific characteristics of New York State, WMS is not considered to be a strong candidate for transfer.

6.0 SYSTEM OPERATIONS

The following section describes New York State's WMS. This system includes a separate but interconnected system within New York City, referred to as downstate, and a system in Albany serving the rest of the State, referred to as upstate. Each section will describe both systems and provide a summary of how they interact relative to that section.

6.1 System Profile

• **Mainframe:**		4	Unisys 2200/9222 (Upstate) Unisys 2200/900 (NYC)
• **Disk:**	Albany	214	drives
		58	Unisys Model 9740
		152	Unisys Model 9760
		4	Zitel
	NYC	119	drives
		97	Unisys Model 9740

		22	Amperif
• **Tapes:**	Albany	8	U36-II drives (9-track)
		72	U40 cartridge drives
	NYC	8	U36-II drives
		48	U40 cartridge drives
• **Printers:**	Albany	2	9790 Xerox laser
		4	Xerox 3700 laser
		3	Xerox 4075 laser
		2	9246-25b impact
	NYC	2	9246-25b impact
		2	IBM 3800 laser
• **Front end:**	Albany	3	DCP/50; 2 DCP/40
	NYC	5	4 DCP/50; 1 DCP/40
• **Workstations:**			Information not provided
• **Telecommunications:**			Statewide backbone, T1 circuits with 56KB lines to local hubs; 9600/2400 baud lines to remote offices; T1/T3 trunk line between DC/50s at Albany and NYC

6.2 Description of Operating Environment

The WMS operating environment consists of several components in NYC and in upstate New York. This section describes these components, including the current operating system, environment, telecommunications, performance, response time, and downtime. This section also discusses enhancements that are planned for the future or are currently in process.

6.2.1 Operating Environment

The DSS data centers operate 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, and regular operations for WMS are 5 days a week, 10 hours a day. The NYC and upstate systems also are available evenings and weekends on a scheduled basis. Operations staff work three 12-hour shifts, three days a week, and volunteer for overtime on Sunday.

The Unisys mainframes are dedicated to DSS in both NYC and Albany. Each 9222 has two CPUs and two I/O processors. There is dual redundancy at both sites, i.e., either site can switch the production system to the user or development system if problems occur with the production mainframe. The disaster recovery system for each site would be to

switch functions to the other site. It would, however, take several days to two weeks for either system to become fully functional in case of disaster.

The NYC system is also linked to an IBM 4083. This is housed in the HRA computer room with the Unisys 2200s. There is a dynamic data link between the two systems, but cartridge tape is the normal way to transfer files and communicate between systems. For files of any size, NYC and the State have found that a cartridge tape transfer is almost as fast as a direct data transfer.

Both sites have computers for development and departmental computing that are separate from the production machines. Within NYC, there are two computing systems going to most of the centers; one carries WMS and other DSS applications over a Unisys network, the other carries other NYC HRA systems over a Motorola network.

Both WMS sites have all tape drives, disk drives, and front end processors "multi-pathed" for optimum throughput and reliability. There was a significant improvement in batch operations with the implementation of the cartridge tape system. Operators still load tapes upon request. However, the policy of using tape primarily for tape transfers and backup keeps the number of "on request" tape mounts to a minimum.

WMS is written in COBOL 74. The Unisys 6000s can only use UTS, the Unisys proprietary COBOL for Unix. Future 6000 development will be done in MicroFocus COBOL and C on the Micro 6000s. At present, the 6000s are strictly staging areas with 364 megabyte disk drives.

All paths and all CPUs are dual pathed to facilitate throughput and keep the system "fail safe".

Specific features of the NYC system include:

- Manual food stamp recoupment
- EPFT (daily transfer of a batch file to issuance agent)
- One year of on-line benefit history; additional information available on request from the archives
- Eligibility and case information for closed cases is kept on-line in the database.
- Cross county matching is accomplished using SSN and CIN.
- IV-E, adoption, and foster care system is on the IBM. This is another area of cross system communication, usually by means of cartridge tapes.
- COBOL 77 is used to write reports for FSP on the IBM.

- Changes are submitted to MIS in writing and MIS decides how long it will take to perform the request.
- The PA portion of the IBM is supported by 19 system analysts and programmers.
- The IBM staff has a backlog of 150-200 requests pending.
- There is a User Test Committee for larger requests (those over 8 hours of development time).
- Users can run reports using Remote Job Entry (RJE) from the IBM.

6.2.2 State Operations and Maintenance

In Albany, the Department of Social Services maintains its own data center. In NYC, HRA administers its own computer center together with the State Human Services computers. The facility is jointly managed. There are separate network control staff at each site.

There is separate software with different architectures in the two WMS systems. The NYC system is distributed in the centers and has some distributed editing. The upstate system is centralized with dumb terminals in the field. Therefore, there are separate application software support teams to support the systems. Both teams are now located in Albany. The support staff estimate that there are only five or six additional fields on the NYC system and that all field definitions are the same. However, NYC has additional criteria, edits, codes, and notice situations that the upstate system does not have or need. The additional NYC requirements are a result of lawsuits and advocacy group actions against NYC.

The State application software group at one time had 35 support staff, it now has 17. The NYC development and software support staff numbered approximately 43 in 1988 plus 33 additional NYC staff and Grumann contract help for development. The total staffing was over 100. The NYC support group is now down to 25 systems and programming staff. Only emergency and legislative requirements are implemented in the system.

Additionally, there are three major initiatives or enhancements in development -- EBICS, CNS, and EEDSS. The State would also like to implement an automatic closure enhancement but decided not to do so until CNS is in place.

The State wrote its own security software since there was nothing available from Unisys or the third party market at the time of implementation.

Both systems utilize batch extract files for some users to access via SPSS. The normal report procedure, however, is a COBOL report. NYC runs its reports against an extract file on the IBM. The State runs its against an extract file on the Unisys.

6.2.3 Telecommunications

New York State uses a very reliable statewide system provided by Nynex and AT&T. T1 backbones traverse the State with 56KB lines to local hubs and 9600/2400 baud lines to the remote offices. The State controls the network through a late model Raytheon controller with remote management of local lines and automatic switching capabilities when circuit problems occur.

NYC uses 56KB lines that are routed under the streets to locations in various buildings. NYC has over 7000 terminals on the WMS network. Some buildings do not have enough lines available from the phone company. Some lines are susceptible to moisture and electrical interference from the subways. Downtime is an issue in NYC; even with distributed PCs, the transactions still have to go to the central site for clearance and additional editing.

6.2.4 System Performance

The State system batch capability has been tremendously improved by the installation of cartridge tape drives. Nonetheless, the batch system is often very slow around the beginning and the end of the month.

In the NYC WMS, there is a self imposed limit of 12 terminals on each 4000 controller. This is not a hardware limit, but a State imposed limit to keep performance acceptable.

Transaction traffic for the on-line system upstate is at two million transactions per day. This is growing at a rate of 30 to 40 million a year. One disk drive is scheduled to be added each month. Another CPU or a CPU pair is scheduled for 1994. The batch systems can run concurrently with on-line processing.

The city system is currently in transition from Unisys 4000 controllers with little intelligence to Unisys 6000 micro/minicomputers based on the Intel 486 chip. The centers on the new 6000 systems move with sub-second response time through the screens. The centers on the older 4000 controllers average one second or more for a *normal* screen change in a busy office. Internal response time at the NYC host is less than 0.69 seconds for over 98 percent of the transactions. The new 6000 systems will replace 40 MB hard drives with 300 MB hard drives. Some centers will have as many as six 6000 servers. This platform will prepare NYC for the EEDSS enhancement.

The upstate system runs at an average of 80 percent capacity. At peak times it reaches 100 percent saturation. This system will need considerable help with on-line notices, alerts, and automatic closure. The movement to Ethernet and expert technology in the field is a long-range solution to accommodate program growth without increasing mainframes.

The downstate system is also saturated at peak times. Response time can average as long as eight to 10 seconds per screen when the system is performing a batch process (e.g., a

mass change) during the day. State staff indicated, however, that such occurrences are unusual.

6.2.5 System Response

Planned response time for the upstate system is less than 1.5 seconds for all local transactions. The average response time in the counties is close to this goal. At peak times the system slows considerably. This does not have a direct affect on intake since the registration is done via data entry staff and the transactions are batched for transmission to the host. The registration, immediate matching, and update takes place in the background on the mainframe. However, if the worker wants to make an inquiry or needs a record retrieved from the central file, several seconds can transpire before response.

During the busiest season (winter) response time degrades somewhat because the system is so close to capacity.

6.2.6 System Downtime

CPU or central downtime is not an issue in either system. The on-line can be up while the batch continues to run. However, telecommunications downtime is an issue in NYC.

6.2.7 Current Activities and Future Plans

New York tends to use either the upstate or the NYC system to pilot a new enhancement. Many enhancements are piloted upstate first since there is much less exposure for an error to effect the overall error rate. NYC has 70 percent of the State's overall caseload and a one percent error there can increase the error rate for the whole State by roughly one percent.

On the other hand, NYC had access to their data via reports, and software enhancements were easier to accommodate before WMS was implemented. These items cause some NYC FSP management staff to feel that they may have taken a step backwards with the State system.

The entire State is moving to a LAN/Wide Area Network (WAN) environment based on the Ethernet standard. The Intel based 486 Unisys model 6000s and DEC controllers are a platform that will enable the State to move to a more productive environment with interactive interviewing, expert systems, and local databases updated daily for scheduled client appointments.

The imaging project will use the 6000s as a platform for a system that contains the client file and an electronic signature to pass with the file from one center to another. The original file folder would stay in the original site.

7.0 COST AND COST ALLOCATION

This section of the report identifies the system development costs, operational costs, and methodologies used to allocate costs of the New York Department of Social Services Welfare Management System and other systems which support the Food Stamp Program.

New York has problems with cost allocation in some instances. As a system is implemented over time, different programs increase or decrease in their benefit and involvement in the system, different populations are added, and other populations become less predominant. According to the State, this should cause a change in the allocation. Therefore, the development of different components of the system should have different cost benefit factors and a different cost allocation methodology. This approach has not been accepted by the Federal oversight agencies and has caused delays in APD approval.

7.1 WMS Development Costs and Federal Funding

WMS was conceptualized in the early 1970s to address the State's growing need for a more advanced, centralized public welfare support system. Additionally, several mandates (MMIS Bills A.12234 and S.10526) amplified the need to construct a centralized, statewide individual-oriented PA eligibility file. In addition to the Food Stamp Program, this system was designed to support PA, AFDC, Medical Payments, Supplemental Security Income, Social Services, and Child Support Enforcement Programs. A proposed design and implementation plan was submitted in October 1976.

DSS currently maintains several systems which support the Food Stamp Program. WMS is the primary system, operating separate upstate and downstate WMS systems. The development costs funded by FNS are shown in Table 7.1, NY DSS FNS ADP Development Funding 1982-1992.

7.1.1 Upstate and NYC Systems Development Costs and Federal Funding

WMS development costs, funding, and enhanced funding amounts have been subject to much debate. DSS has never received enhanced funding from FNS for WMS development activities. WMS upstate and WMS NYC development costs have been adjusted numerous times to reflect various audits and findings. The cost figures in this report reflect the latest available adjustments. The Federal Office of Inspector General (OIG) audited DSS WMS development cost accumulation procedures (Federal Audit 02-50217, State audit 84-074). DSS accumulated $126,578,752 into one account between October 1975 and March 1982.[4] This accumulation account included costs for WMS upstate development, WMS upstate operations, WMS NYC development, local data management improvement projected, and administrative support overhead. The focus of the audit was to isolate WMS upstate development costs.

[4] Office of Financial Management WMS Upstate Adjustment report 4/91.

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Table 7.1 NY DSS FNS ADP Development Funding 1982-1992[5]

Federal Fiscal Year	SF-269 ADP Development	FNS Federal Outlay

WMS upstate development costs incurred between November 1976 and January 1982 totaled $85,448,857. Of this total, the FNS allocation was $5,960,657, or 6.98 percent, with an FNS FFP rate of 50 percent, or $2,980,328.[6]

The first NYC APD was submitted in November 1981. This APD projected total NYC WMS development costs to be $75,416,250. Development was projected to take place between October 1981 and December 1985. The Food Stamp Program share was projected to be 19.96 percent (12.47 percent PA/FSP and 7.49 percent NPA FSP).

A WMS NYC SPD was developed in April 1984. This SPD showed expenditures to date for WMS NYC totaling $21,345,026, of which $5,592,397 was attributed to the Food Stamp Program. It also showed WMS NYC development costs incurred between April 1977 and January 1982 totaling $80,469,968. Of this total, the FNS Federal share was $17,260,352[7], or 21 percent.

7.1.2 Other Systems Development Costs and Federal Funding

In addition to the WMSs, several other systems supporting the Food Stamp Program were developed after the implementation of both WMSs with funding from FNS.

In September 1981, DSS submitted an APD for the development and implementation of the Local Data Management Improvement Project (LDMIP). This effort was intended to improve post-authorization functions, such as printing food stamp ATPs and supporting claim accounting and reconciliations. Funding of $2,965,923 was requested for LDMIP development and implementation costs in three pilot districts. The FNS share of LDMIP development totaled $449,551, with an FFP of 50 percent, or $224,775.[8]

An APD for the Fair Hearings Decision Management System was submitted in November 1985 to automate an overwhelmed manual fair hearings system. The total estimated development cost of this system was projected to be $2,794,767.

An SPD for the design, development, and statewide implementation of the Benefit Issuance and Control System was submitted in July 1985. BICS was projected to cost $10,483,808. The total actual development cost of BICS was $10,473,549 with an FNS share of $4,483,726 (42.81 percent). The FNS enhanced funding share was $2,241,863 at 50 percent and $3,362,795 at 75 percent.[9]

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[6] Office of Financial Management WMS - Upstate Adjustment Report.

[7] Ibid.

[8] NY DSS Central Office internal report.

[9] Northeast Regional Office APD Project Report, 9/01/89.

An APD to develop and implement an Income and Eligibility Verification System was submitted in May 1986. This APD requested $983,414 of which 35.95 percent ($353,537) was allocated to the Food Stamp Program with an FFP of 75 percent.

The Electronic Eligibility Decision Support Subsystem is currently being developed to assist with expedited eligibility interviews. The September 1992 EEDSS Implementation APD projected total EEDSS costs of $3,520,186, with an FNS share of 22.38 percent or $728,818. Federal approval of this APD has not yet been received.

In a response to a large number of litigation proceedings, a Client Notification System is currently being developed to enhance client notification functions of WMS. Costs for this WMS enhancement were projected to be $5,239,188 in the Client Notices Subsystem APD, November 1992. Using the final WMS/NYC funding allocations, the FNS portion of the Client Notices Subsystem was projected at 26.4 percent. For fiscal years 1991 and 1992, costs have totaled $693,987, of which FNS has funded $182,212.

7.2 Operational Costs

Costs for WMS upstate and downstate are tracked and consolidated at the Central Office. Operating costs for the 58 counties (57 upstate plus NYC) are allocated among DSS programs. The major DSS programs are AFDC, Foster Care, General Assistance, and food stamps. The FNS share of WMS operating costs averages around 29 percent of total costs annually.[10] WMS operating costs and the FNS share over the last four years is shown in Table 7.2, WMS Operating Costs 1989-92.

Table 7.2 WMS Operating Costs 1989-92

Year	WMS Operating Costs	FNS Share	FNS % Share
1989	$69,953,664	$20,333,782	29%
1990	$60,427,405	$17,558,787	29%
1991	$63,620,903	$18,773,913	30%
1992	$56,969,993	$16,723,913	29%

Local offices use WMS and other Food Stamp Program support systems through remote terminals attached to mainframes. There are no local (county) ADP operations expenses. WMS ADP operating expenses are incurred entirely by WMS upstate and WMS NYC operations.

[10] Office of Financial Management Central Office Cost Allocation Claim Report October - December 1991 and 1992.

7.2.1 Cost Per Case

Based on 1992 FSP operating costs of $16,723,913, monthly operating costs averaged $1,396,159 in 1992. The average number of FSP cases monthly was 866,037 households. The cost per case -- the monthly operational costs divided by the number of monthly cases -- was $1.61.

7.2.2 ADP Operational Cost Control Measures and Practices

WMS operating costs are tracked on the State Controller System. WMS operating costs are accumulated in the five following accounts or categories:

- Wage Reporting System (WRS) - Provides program applicant wage information from the Tax Department to WMS
- Benefit Issuance and Control System - Once eligibility is determined through WMS, BICS issues benefits electronically utilizing a magnetic strip card at the point of sale. EBICS will replace this system statewide
- WMS Operations Upstate - Full computer operation of WMS's upstate operations
- WMS Operations NYC - Full computer operation of WMS
- Medical Assistance Food Stamp ID Card Processing - Costs associated with the printing and distribution of identification cards

Mainframes and communications lines are leased. Costs for ADP staff and overhead are developed by the Information Technology Management (ITM) Office and submitted to the Central Office. Items which are not directly attributable to specific programs are allocated based on the various allocation methods which are discussed in Section 7.4.

7.3 Cost Allocation Methodologies

This section addresses the development and operating cost allocation methodologies used by the State DSS to allocate costs associated with the current systems which support the Food Stamp Program. The current Cost Allocation Plan has been approved by DHHS and FNS.

7.3.1 Overview of Development Cost Allocation Methodology

New York never agreed with the FNS decision on reduced funding enhancement. The cost allocation methodology was disputed, reviewed, and adjusted several times for both the upstate and NYC WMS development efforts.

The allocation methodology presented in the October 1976 APD was based on a combination of data elements and record sizes. Data element percentages were developed

by taking the proportion of elements attributable to a specific program and factoring in weights for attributes which related to specific programs. Record size percentages were determined by taking the proportion of field sizes associated with primary attributes to total attributes.

This allocation methodology was reviewed and adjusted in 1977 to make a more equitable method of allocation still based on data elements. This adjustment gave a higher percentage of funding to DHHS.

The NYC (downstate) WMS development effort that projected the FNS share of 19.9 percent was also based on recipient counts and data elements. Counts were taken from the DSS Social Statistics report, compiled by the Bureau of Data Management, which tracked recipient counts. Recipient counts were aggregated for each program area from which an individual receives support. In September 1988, DSS and DHHS came to an agreement on Federal funding allocations. The final allocations for WMS NYC development were:

- FNS at 24.7 percent with a 50 percent FFP
- Title IV-A at 35.6 percent with a 50 percent FFP
- Title XIX at 26.4 percent with a 90 percent FFP
- State at 13.3 percent with no FFP

7.3.2 Cost Allocation Methodologies for other Food Stamp Program Support Systems

The BICS development funding allocation is based on distributed recipient counts. The FNS allocation percentage for BICS was estimated at 57.78 percent with a 75 percent FFP.[11] Costs for the development of the Client Notification System were based on duplicated recipient count, which were the same allocation percentages as WMS upstate.

The IEVS development funding allocation was based on upstate duplicated recipient counts for Title IV-A, Title XIX, and FSP. This yielded the following allocations[12]:

- Food Stamp Program 35.95 percent
- Title IV-A 19.60 percent
- Title XIX 44.45 percent

[11] BICS APD, July 1985.

[12] IEVS APD, May 1986.

The Fair Hearing Decision System development allocation was based on the latest quarterly count of hearing decisions generated and transmitted to the client population. The FNS allocation percentage for the Fair Hearing Decision System was estimated at 25.16 percent with a 75 percent FFP.[13]

7.3.3 Operating Cost Allocation Methodologies and Mechanics

Operating costs are allocated among allocation accounts and program accounts. Each of these allocation accounts has its own allocation method. Operating costs are broken down into direct and indirect cost items and then broken down further into several expenditure object amounts. The WMS operating expense accounts and their objects are shown in Appendix A, Table A-7.3, WMS Operating Accounts and Expenditure Objects.

Direct costs, which consist of personal services and non-personal (fringe) costs are based on a payroll analysis each quarter. Non-attributable personal services cost allocations are based on the percentages of program attributable personal services.
The Central Office estimates monthly costs based on adjusted prior quarters expenditures. When the local offices submit claims, the appropriate adjustments are made.

WMS operating expenditures are aggregated into the following five cost pools:

WMS Upstate Operations - Full computer operation of the WMS upstate operations costs are allocated based on distribution of recipient counts of AFDC, EAF, General Assistance, Medicaid, LEAP, and FSP. The Food Stamp Program allocation averages around 28 percent.[14]

WMS Operations NYC (Downstate) - Full computer operation of the downstate WMS operations costs are allocated based on recipient/transaction counts for AFDC, EAF, GA, Medicaid, and FSP. The FSP allocation was unavailable.

Wage Reporting System - Provides program applicant wage information from the Tax Department to WMS. The NY State Department of Taxation and Finance maintains a file of people employed within the State. Employee processing hours and related costs are segregated into program areas on a work sheet and segregated to specific program areas based on a percentage distribution of recipient counts. During the last quarter the Food Stamp Program allocation percentage was 32.59 percent of total costs.[15]

[13] Fair Hearing System APD, November 1985.

[14] Based on average over the last three years.

[15] Office of Financial Management Central Office Cost Allocation Claim Report October - December 1992.

Benefit Issuance and Control System - BICS costs are allocated based on average unduplicated issuance counts. During the last quarter the Food Stamp Program allocation percentage was 29.93 percent of total costs.[16]

Medical Assistance Food Stamp ID Card Processing - Costs associated with the printing and distribution of ID cards are allocated based on the percentage total of photo and non-photo ID cards processed for each program multiplied by a cost factor to cover overhead. During the last quarter, the Food Stamp Program allocation percentage was 21.35 percent of total costs.[17]

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

APPENDIX A

STATE OF NEW YORK

EXHIBITS

Exhibit A-2.1
Response to Regulatory Changes

Code	Regulation	Provision	Federally Required Implementation Date	Implemented on Time (Y/N)?	Computer Programming Changes Required (Y/N)?	Changes to State Policy/ Legislation Required (Y/N)?
1.1	1: Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act	1: Excludes as income State or local GA payments to DHHS provided as vendor payments. 273.9(c)(1)(ii)(F)	8/1/91	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.2	1: Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act	2: Excludes from income annual school clothing allowance however paid. 273.9(c)(5)(i)(F)	8/1/91	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.3	1: Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act	3: Excludes as resource for food stamp purposes, household resources exempt by Public Assistance (PA) and SSI in mixed household. 273.8(e)(17)	2/1/92*	Y	N	Y
1.4	1: Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act	4: State agency shall use a standard estimate of shelter expense for households with homeless members. 273.9(d)(5)(i)	2/1/92*	Y	Y	Y
2.1	2: Administrative Improvement & Simplification Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	1: Extended resource exclusion of farm property and vehicles. 273.8(e)(5),etc.	7/1/89	Y	N	N
2.2	2: Administrative Improvement & Simplification Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	2: Combined initial allotment under normal time frames. 274.2(b)(2)	1/1/90	Y	Y	Y
2.3	2: Administrative Improvement & Simplification Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	3: Combined initial allotment under expedited service time frames. 274.2(b)(3)	1/1/90	Y	Y	Y

Exhibit A-2.1
Response to Regulatory Changes

Code	Regulation	Provision	Federally Required Implementation Date	Implemented on Time (Y/N)?	Computer Programming Changes Required (Y/N)?	Changes to State Policy/ Legislation Required (Y/N)?
3.1	3: Disaster Assistance Act & Non-Discretionary Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	1: Exclusion of job stream migrant vendor payments. 273.9(c)(1)(ii)	9/1/88	Y	N	N
3.2	3: Disaster Assistance Act & Non-Discretionary Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	2: Exclusion of advance earned income tax credit payments. 273.9(c)(14)	1/1/89*	Y	N	N
3.3	3: Disaster Assistance Act & Non-Discretionary Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	3: Increase dependent care deductions. 273.9(f)(4), etc.	10/1/88	Y	Y	Y
3.4	3: Disaster Assistance Act & Non-Discretionary Provisions of the Hunger Prevention Act	4: Eliminate migrant initial month proration. 273.10(a)(1)(ii)	9/1/88	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
4.1	4: Issuance	1: Mail issuance must be staggered over at least ten days. 274.2(c)(1)	4/1/89	N/A	N/A	N/A
4.2	4: Issuance	2: Limitation on the number of replacement issuances. 274.6(b)(2)	10/1/89	Y	N	N
4.3	4: Issuance	3: Destruction of unusable coupons within 30 days. 274.7(f)	4/1/89	Y	N	N

* These dates were changed after the State completed this form and the site visit occurred; therefore, the responses to these particular regulatory changes may be inaccurate.

Exhibit A-6.1
State of New York
Hardware Inventory

Component	Make	Acquisition Method	Number/ Features
CPU			
2200/9222 (upstate)	Unisys	Purchase	132M words (2)
2200/900 (NYC)	Unisys	Purchase	132M words (2)
DISK			
Upstate -			
9740	Unisys	Purchase	Controllers (15), drives (58)
9760	Unisys	Purchase	Drives (152)
MDISK	Zitel	Purchase	576 MB - drives (4)
NYC -			
9740	Unisys	Purchase	Controllers (9), drives (97)
9305	Amperif	Purchase	Controller (1), drives (22)
TAPE			
Upstate -			
5042-21/5073	Unisys	Purchase	Controllers (4/21)
U36-II/U40	Unisys	Purchase	Drives (8/72)
NYC -			
5042-21/5073	Unisys	Purchase	Controllers (4/16)
U36-II/U40	Unisys	Purchase	Drives (8/48)
PRINTERS			
Upstate -			
Impact	Unisys	Purchase	9246-25B (4)
Laser	Xerox	Purchase	9790 (2)
Laser	Xerox	Purchase	3700 (4)
Laser	Xerox	Purchase	4075 (3)

NYC - Impact	Unisys	Purchase	9246-25B (2)
FRONT ENDS			
Upstate - DCPs	Unisys	Purchase	50 (1), 40 (2)
NYC - DCPs	Unisys	Purchase	50 (4), 40 (1)
REMOTE EQUIPMENT			
Workstations			Information not provided

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APPENDIX B

STATE OF NEW YORK

ANALYSIS OF OPERATOR USER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

OVERVIEW

This appendix presents the results of the Operational Level User Satisfaction Survey. Frequency counts of responses to all applicable items on the survey are included, grouped by the topic covered by the item. The results for the items covering each topic are summarized as well.

The responses to the Operational Level User Satisfaction Survey are the perceptions of eligibility workers in New York. In other words, these responses do not necessarily represent a "true" description of the situation in New York. For example, the results presented regarding the response time of the system reflect the workers' perceptions about that response time, not an objective measure of the actual speed of the response.

Description of the Sample

The following table summarizes the potential population size and the final size of the sample who responded.

Number of EWs in New York	Number Selected to Receive Survey	Percentage Selected
1,284	63	4.9%
	Number Responding to Survey	Response Rate
	19	30.2%

The eligibility workers selected to receive the survey were selected randomly so their perceptions should be representative of eligibility workers in New York. The response rate of 30 percent is quite low, producing a sample whose responses may not be representative of eligibility workers in New York.

Summary of Findings

Most of the eligibility workers are satisfied with the computer systems in New York. They generally find it very accurate, responsive, and easy to learn. One complaint is that the system is down too often. Most respondents also think the computer system is a great help in their jobs. The eligibility workers generally do not have difficulty performing any of the system-specific tasks but there are majorities that did express problems with some tasks.

Since the New York systems have been operational since 1982 (Upstate and 1986 (NYC), comparisons between the current and previous systems would be of limited value. Responses to comparative questions, therefore, are not solicited for systems that were implemented more than five years ago.

SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

Response Time

What is the quality of overall system response time?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Poor	1	5.9
Good	13	76.5
Excellent	3	17.6

What is the quality of system response time during peak periods?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Poor	5	29.4
Good	10	58.8
Excellent	2	11.8

How often is the system response time too slow?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	4	22.2
Sometimes	12	66.7
Often	2	11.1

The eligibility workers who responded almost all agree that the system's response time is usually good or excellent but a majority (78 percent) agree that response time is sometimes or often slow.

Availability

How often is the system available when you need to use it?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	1	5.6
Sometimes	8	44.4
Often	9	50.0

How often is the system down?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	3	16.7
Sometimes	11	61.1
Often	4	22.2

A large majority (94 percent) of the eligibility workers who responded think the system is generally available although a majority only slightly smaller (83 percent) agrees that it is sometimes or often down.

Accuracy

What is the quality of the information in the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Good	15	83.3
Excellent	3	16.7

How often is a case terminated in error?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	13	81.3
Sometimes	3	18.8

How often is eligibility incorrectly determined?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	14	87.5
Sometimes	2	12.5

How often is the systems data out-of-date?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	15	83.3
Sometimes	3	16.7

The eligibility workers who responded consistently feel that the operations of the system are accurate. All of them think the information in the system is either good or excellent.

Ease of Use

How often do you have difficulty obtaining necessary information from the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	15	83.3
Sometimes	3	16.7

How often do you have difficulty learning to use the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	16	94.1
Sometimes	1	5.9

How often do you have difficulty tracking receipt of monthly reporting forms?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	11	91.7
Sometimes	1	8.3

How often do you have difficulty automatically terminating benefits for failure to file?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	10	100.0

How often do you have difficulty generating adverse action notices?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	6	85.7
Often	1	14.3

How often do you have difficulty generating warning notices?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	7	87.5
Often	1	12.5

How often do you have difficulty determining monthly reporting status?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	7	77.8
Sometimes	1	11.1
Often	1	11.1

How often do you have difficulty restoring benefits?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	9	69.2
Sometimes	4	30.8

How often do you have difficulty identifying recipients already known to the State?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	13	81.3
Sometimes	2	12.5
Often	1	6.3

How often do you have difficulty updating registration data?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	12	100.0

How often do you have difficulty updating eligibility and benefit information from recertification data?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	14	93.3
Sometimes	1	6.7

How often do you have difficulty identifying cases which are overdue for recertification?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	11	78.6
Sometimes	2	14.3
Often	1	7.1

How often do you have difficulty monitoring the status of all hearings?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	3	42.9
Sometimes	2	28.6
Often	2	28.6

How often do you have difficulty tracking outstanding verifications?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	4	44.4
Sometimes	5	55.6

How often do you have difficulty automatically notifying households of case actions?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	9	100.0

How often do you have difficulty notifying recipients that recertification is required?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	11	84.6
Sometimes	2	15.4

How often do you have difficulty identifying cases making payments through recoupment?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	7	63.6
Sometimes	3	27.3
Often	1	9.1

How often do you have difficulty identifying error prone cases?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	6	75.0
Sometimes	1	12.5
Often	1	12.5

How often do you have difficulty identifying cases involving suspected fraud?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	5	62.5
Sometimes	2	25.0
Often	1	12.5

How often do you have difficulty assigning new case numbers?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Rarely	10	90.9
Sometimes	1	9.1

Most of the eligibility workers responding do not have difficulty performing any of the system-specific tasks such as assigning new case numbers or generating adverse action notices. However, majorities of the respondents report difficulty with monitoring the status of all hearings and tracking outstanding verifications.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM NEEDS

Worker Satisfaction Levels

How often is the system a great help to you in your job?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Sometimes	1	5.6
Often	17	94.4

How often is the system an added stress in your job?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	10	55.6
Sometimes	7	38.9
Often	1	5.6

How often is the system more of a problem than a help?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	17	94.4
Sometimes	1	5.6

Most of the eligibility workers who responded think that the current system is a great help to them in their work (94 percent) although 45 percent report that it adds stress to their jobs.

Client Service

How often is expedited service difficult to achieve?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	14	82.4
Sometimes	3	17.6

How often do you have difficulty providing expedited services?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents(%)
Rarely	15	93.8
Sometimes	1	6.3

Almost all of the eligibility workers who responded agree that expedited service is rarely difficult to provide.

Fraud and Errors

No data are available to address fraud and errors because all the questions in this category compare the current and previous systems. Since New York's systems were implemented more than five years ago, comparative questions are not applicable.

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APPENDIX C

STATE OF NEW YORK

ANALYSIS OF MANAGERIAL USER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

OVERVIEW

This appendix presents the results of the Managerial Level User Satisfaction Survey. Frequency counts of responses to all items on the survey are included, grouped by the topic covered by the item. The results for the items covering each topic are summarized as well.

The responses to the Managerial Level User Satisfaction Survey are the perceptions of supervisors in New York. In other words, these responses do not necessarily represent a "true" description of the situation in New York. For example, the results presented regarding the response time of the system reflect the managers' perceptions about that response time, not an objective measure of the actual speed of the response.

Description of the Sample

The following table summarizes the potential population size and the final size of the sample who responded.

Number of Supervisors in New York	Number Selected to Receive Survey	Percentage Selected
614	30	4.9
	Number Responding to Survey	Response Rate
	13	43.3%

The supervisors selected to receive the survey were selected randomly so their perceptions should be representative of the population of supervisors in New York. The response rate of 43 percent is low however, producing a sample whose responses may not be representative of supervisors in New York.

Summary of Findings

Most of the supervisors think the system is good and helps them in their jobs. A majority of the respondents found the system easy to use but 46 percent have some problems obtaining information from the system. The supervisors also report rarely having difficulty performing their specific system-related tasks.

Since New York's current systems have been operational since 1982 (Upstate) and 1986 (NYC), comparisons between the current and previous systems would be of limited value. Responses to comparative questions, therefore, are not solicited for systems that were implemented more than five years ago.

SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

Response Time

What is the quality of overall system response time?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Poor	2	16.7
Good	10	83.3

What is the quality of system response time during peak periods?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Poor	6	46.2
Good	7	53.8

How often is the system response time too slow?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	2	15.4
Sometimes	7	53.8
Often	4	30.8

The supervisors who responded almost all agree that the system's response time is generally good or excellent although 85 percent also feel that the system response time is sometimes too slow.

Availability

How often is the system available when you need to use it?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Sometimes	2	15.4
Often	11	84.6

How often is the system down?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	3	23.1
Sometimes	9	69.2
Often	1	7.7

Almost all the supervisors who responded think the system is generally available but more than three quarters also feel that the system is down sometimes or often.

Accuracy

What is the quality of the information in the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Good	13	100.0

The supervisors who responded all think the information in the system is good.

Ease of Use

How often do you have difficulty obtaining necessary information from the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	7	53.8
Sometimes	6	46.2

How often do you have difficulty learning to use the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	11	84.6
Sometimes	2	15.4

How often do you have difficulty tracking receipt of monthly reporting forms?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	7	77.8
Sometimes	2	22.2

How often do you have difficulty automatically terminating benefits for failure to file?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	8	100.0

How often do you have difficulty generating adverse action notices?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	3	75.0
Often	1	25.0

How often do you have difficulty generating warning notices?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	4	80.0
Often	1	20.0

How often do you have difficulty determining monthly reporting status?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	8	88.9
Often	1	11.1

How often do you have difficulty restoring benefits?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	8	61.5
Sometimes	5	38.5

A bare majority of the supervisors responding have no difficulty obtaining information; more than 45 percent report some difficulty obtaining information from the system. Those who responded generally do not have difficulty performing such specific tasks as generating adverse action notices or terminating benefits.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM NEEDS

Supervisor Satisfaction Levels

How often is the system a great help to you in your job?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Sometimes	3	23.1
Often	10	76.9

How often is the system an added stress in your job?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	5	38.5
Sometimes	7	53.8
Often	1	7.7

Most of the supervisors who responded (77 percent) think that the current system is often a great help to them in their work but a majority also feel that it adds stress to their jobs.

Management Needs

What is the quality of the reports produced by the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Poor	1	7.7
Good	12	92.3

What is the quality of the support provided by the technical staff supporting the automated system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Good	13	100.0

How often do you have difficulty making mass changes to the system?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	8	72.7
Sometimes	3	27.3

How often do you have difficulty meeting Federal reporting requirements?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Rarely	7	70.0
Sometimes	3	30.0

Most of the supervisors responding think the system helps them in their management tasks. Almost all think the reports produced by the system are good and all agree that the technical support is good.

Client Service

No data are available to address client service because all the questions in this category compare the current and previous systems. Since the New York systems were implemented more than five years ago, comparative questions are not applicable.

Fraud and Errors

No data are available to address fraud and errors because all the questions in this category compare the current and previous systems. Since the New York systems were implemented more than five years ago, comparative questions are not applicable.